

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 09165 020840Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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USDOC FOR BEWT/USSR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BTRA, UR, US
SUBJECT: VOLUME OF AMERICAN BUSINESS TRAVEL TO USSR

REF: STATE 137428

1. AS SUGGESTED REFTEL, COMMERCIAL OFFICE INITIALLY APPROACHED MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE'S PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT WITH REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON NUMBER OF U.S. BUSINESS VISITORS TO USSR. AFTER MULLING REQUEST OVER FOR SEVERAL DAYS, PROTOCOL OFFICE ADVISED COMMOFF THAT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO MINISTRY'S ADMINISTRATION FOR TRADE WITH COUNTRIES OF AMERICAS, WHICH HAS BEEN DONE.

2. COMMENT: WHILE WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW SOVIETS KEEP THEIR RECORDS OF BUSINESS VISITORS, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY CLASSIFY VISITORS BY COUNTRY WHERE VISA APPLICATION FILED, OR BY COUNTRY WHERE APPLICANT IN QUESTION RESIDES, RATHER THAN COUNTRY WHERE FIRM IN QUESTION HAS HEADQUARTERS. IF THIS IS CASE, ANY SOVIET STATISTICS WOULD VASTLY UNDERSTATE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. FIRMS COMING TO USSR SINCE LARGE NUMBER OF FIRMS SEND REPS FROM WESTERN EUROPEAN OFFICES AND, IN ADDITION, SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THESE COMPANY REPS ARE NOT RPT NOT U.S. NATIONALS. SOVIETS MAY, OF COURSE, SOLVE THIS PROBLEM FOR US BY DECLINING TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REQUESTED. COMMOFF WILL CONTACT MFT SHORTLY TO FOLLOW UP ON LETTER.

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